

California Performance Review
San Jose
August 27, 2004

Good afternoon, Commissioners, ladies, and gentlemen. My name is Bill Hollabaugh, and I am President of the Triple-A Council of California, which is an organization comprised of representatives of the Advisory Councils of the 33 Area Agencies on Aging in the State of California. I am a member and past President of the Advisory Council on Aging of the City and County of San Francisco.

Thursday, August 26, I participated in a meeting of the Coalition for Coordinated Advocacy, with leaders of organizations providing services to seniors and adults with disability. The meeting was for the purpose of examining your proposal in the light of the needs of seniors and persons with disability in California. The Coalition will be producing a report and recommendations.

As we looked over the parts of the California Performance Review of concern to us, two Important Words came to my mind. The first of these is **choice**.

Choice is a key element of the delivery of services to seniors and adult disabled. We believe that the consumer of these services should be able to decide what services to receive and how to receive them. This decision must be an informed decision, based on an understanding of the great complexity of services available. And it must carry with it protection from the desires of others who would gain, either personally or organizationally, from a less than optimal choice.

The consumer in need of services is faced with a daunting array of possibilities. This brings me to the second of my Important Words, which is **collaboration**. In order for the consumer in need of help to make an informed decision, providers of services must collaborate in their provision of those services to provide the information required for the decision as well as to eliminate needless duplication of service and to provide for efficient delivery of the right services.

As I look at your proposal for the reorganization of California government, I have concern that the opportunity for a change that would enhance collaboration among agencies to provide consumers with informed choice is not provided. For example, you have placed Services to

Aging in the Social Services Division while IHSS, which provides very essential services to the same population, is placed in the Health Purchasing Division. This perpetuates a major issue we have with services in California today, an issue which we often describe in terms of “silos” of service, where consumers go from agency to agency in search of assistance, often making a poor choice for lack of information.

In San Francisco, we are currently working with a grant of \$750,000 from the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation to implement a strategic plan which we developed. A key principle of this implementation is “no wrong door”. We want to ensure that no matter where a consumer of services contacts a part of the service network, that consumer is provided with information about services available in a way that he or she can understand so that an informed choice is possible.

You state in the introduction to your proposal that

“We targeted duplicative and wasteful overhead costs, and found solutions to deliver services more effectively in a governmental structure that will be more responsive and accountable to the public.”

I submit that you have not achieved this objective in your proposal as it relates to services for seniors and adults with disability. This is because your proposal makes it highly unlikely that effect collaboration among providers of services will occur, whether they be part of government or private community-based organizations. The result of this failure will be sub-optimal choices on the part of those being served.

I suggest that if you provide an organization that is based on consumer needs rather than funding streams and bureaucratic classification of service, you will achieve significant cost savings because you will be able to provide the right service at the right time in a continuum of opportunities that address the changing needs of the consumer as he or she advances through life. I believe that, for example, you will more readily discover that IHSS services will work better than institutional care, and for very significant savings of money while providing improved quality of life to the consumer – and, in addition, better meeting the requirements of the Olmstead Decision. Finally, such an approach will be more responsive to Californians while still achieving your other goals.

Commissioners, I hope that you as well as others responsible for the implementation of your proposal, will look at changes to achieve these goals of **choice** and **collaboration**.

William F. Hollabaugh
15 Woodard Street
San Francisco, CA 94103
415-864-5683
bill@benbill.com